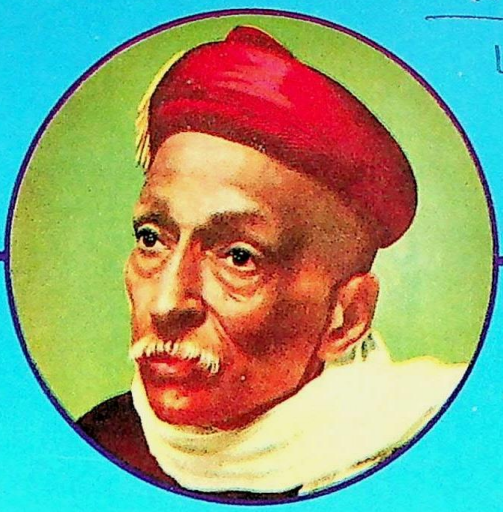
April
1993



PATHWAY TO GOD

Vol XXVII April 1993 No. 3

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL
ACADEMY OF COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY
& RELIGION, BELGAUM

PATHWAY TO GOD

(A Quarterly Journal of Spiritual Life)

"ONE GOD, ONE WORLD, ONE HUMANITY"

Editor : Prof. T. F. Bidari

Vol XXVII **April 1993** **No. 3**

CONTENTS

Prayers to Sri Rāmachandra
Verses from Yoga—Vasista
Editorial—Like a Dry Leaf
Tulsidasa's Rama – Dr. Smt. Kamala B. Vaidya 1
Amritanubhava—Madhao Deo 12
Shiva-awareness—Prof. T. F. Bidari 16
A Glimpse of Gurudev 23
Self-Realisation—by Gurudev Ranade 27
Book Review 33
Academy Report 43
Book Section

Annual Subscription

India (Bharat)	Rs. 25-00
Foreign (By Surface Mail)	,, 100-00
Single copy	,, 8-00
Life Subscription	,, 250-00

Statement about ownership and particulars about ' Pathway to God ' quarterly journal

Form IV (Rule 8)

1	Place of Publication	:	**Gurudev Mandir Hindwadi, Belgaum 590011**
2	Periodicity	:	**Quarterly**
3	Printer's Name & Address	:	**Swastik Printing Press, Huns Talkies Road Belgaum**
4	Publisher's Name	:	**Academy of Comparative. Philosophy & Religion, Hindwadi, Belgaum 590011**
5	Editor's Name	:	**Prof T. F Bidari, Editor**
	Address	:	**Gurudev Mandir, Belgaum Karnataka state**
	Nationality	:	**Indian**
6	Name and address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the capital.	:	**Academy of Comparative Philosophy & Religion, (Public Trust) Belgaum**

I, Shri J M. Kulkarni Secretary, Board of Trustees, Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Belgaum–590011

Dated : 31st March 1993

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Board of Trustees

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Prayers to Sri Rāmachandra

१) पवित्रं चरित्रं विचित्रं त्वदीयं
नरा ये स्मरन्त्यन्वहं रामचंद्र ।
भवंतं भक्तं भरन्तं भजन्तो
लभन्ते कृतांतं न पश्यंत्यतोऽन्ते ॥

Stanza 10 ... Sankarācharya

O Rāmachandra, those blessed people who think of your holy and wonderful life-story day and night, and pray for blessing and protection, such people at the time of death do not espy Lord Yama for they gain you very well.

— Sri Ramabhujanga Prayāta Stotram

२ नान्यास्पृहा रघुपते हृपयेऽस्मदीये
सत्यं वदामि च भवानखिलान्तरात्मा ।
भक्तिं प्रयच्छ रघुपुंगव निर्भरां मे
कामादिदोषरहितं कुरू मानसं च ॥

Stanza 10, Tulsidas

O Raghupati, no other desire is sheltered in my heart. I speak the truth : Thou art the indweller of Heart of all beings; bless me with fullness of devotion, and ward off the defects of lust and passion from my mind.

— Sri Ramachandrastavah

Verses from Yoga-Vasista (Stories)

Nirvāna Prakaranam. (PP. 106-107.)

The joy which one feels when one's senses come into contact with their objects is in reality the joy of the self alone. By concentrating on the Self one realises that one is Brahman. The mind then ceases to be the mind.

Verse 12

The mind of who has known Brahman is no more mind. It is Truth (Reality). The ignorant man's mind grasps many things instead of Brahman. The jnānā's mind is, on account of the knowledge of Brahman, similar to copper which has become gold (by alchemy)

Verse 13

His mind though involved in worldly affairs off and on, enters the fourth state (Turiya) and remains as pure consciousness which is beyond Turiya.

Verse 14

It is Brahman which appears as this immense world of multiplicity. Brahman is everything. There is nothing else, not even the mind. Everything else is imagination.

Verse 15

Born :
JAMKHANDI
3-7-1886

Samadhi :
NIMBAL
6-6-1957

EDITORIAL

Like a Dry Leaf शुष्कपर्णवत्।

The sage, the Mahatma, like Gurudev Ranade or Shri Ramana Maharshi, is like a 'dry leaf'– 'Shushka parnavat,' says the Upanisadic Verse. Even the ordinary person, engrossed in worldly life, and bound by silver threads of fate and ego, is a dry leaf, since the outer forces- 'The winds' move a person hither and thither, in the vast firmament of mental phenomena. We know neither, the direction nor the destination; but we move about constantly thinking that there is plan as direction of purpose in our action, both mental and physical. If all actions be directed by a higher power and Divine force, why should anyone be proud of attainment? If destiny is true as shown by many saints and Mahatmas, in the manner of 'NIYATI', we are only a leaf caught-up in wind-current. Secondly in social hobnob, man is forced by many social relations and interactions to behave in a particular way, which is independent of individual's will and conation. No act of a layman, or of a saint, is free and indeterminate. How then is man bound by egoism, vanity or vicious nature? In a way man is only a dry leaf, caught up in whirlwind of ignorance. One has only to know the inanity and nothingness of ego or purpose, in one's acts and behaviour.

This is Sunya vāda-the theory of void or nothingness.

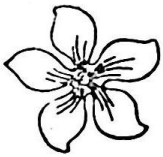
A dry leaf floating in vast expanse of sky, being forced by wind and hurricane, has no subsistence of virtue or vice, ego or individuality. It is only an apparent reality for an observer; but in its nature it has no heaviness of body and corporeality. So too a saint without motivation or egoism is a buoyant spirit, which is untouched by death or disease. For a Mahatma, death loses its meaning. because He is fearless spirit, - the purity of self in an incorporeality of pure existence. Mahatma is eternal, deathless, and is all present existence like ether, air or sky. The real meaning of 'dry leaf' is non-existence as corporeality or as body of heaviness. To know our Masters, and to follow their noble path of purity, means the process of elimination of ego-concept or of the puzzling concept of ignorance and darkness. We need not rise to the exalted positions of yogis, nor can we understand the deep implications of noble teachings of Masters in our ordinary ways of social living. But we too, like our exalted masters are only non-existenee (in the sense of egoism and mentalism), for we have no set purpose, nor the fixed meaning of moral nature of freedom. How simple is the Upanisadic Concept of dry leaf, for it solves all problems of Metaphysics !

Man is a holy leaf पत्रं पवित्रं .... *at the, feet, of Master, and Guru Maharaj, always in all actions and reactions. The real meaning of surrender, nonegoism, and 'Sunyata' or nothingness of subsistence is to live as a dry leaf, placed at the altar of Master in a form of great worship* महापूजा । *The implication of religious Teachings and spiritual instructions is the holy purpose of pure living which tantamounts to non-living*

and non-material existence in Holy spirit. Master speaks a lot in silence to the empty mind of egoless dry leaf-the purest devotee. The language of silence, or the language of purity and power of spirit means that we cease to exist as foolish man of ignorance. Man can be immortal, now and here, only if he knows the foolishness of egoistic living and firmness of belief incorporeality and body-mind form. Crossing the boundaries of false existence, egoistic subsistence and ignorant body-complex man becomes deathless, limitless and non-spatial and nontemporal, real existence Whether we believe in our purity of existence and divinity of spirit, or not, we, by the grace of Gurudeo, continue to serve the noble cause and purpose of Master-mind, as long as we are conscious beings. The truth is not lost in the cloud; nor is it a razor's edge But every man (and woman) in this golden period of MAHAYOGA continues to be linked to Luminaries of spiritualism, - the great Adepts who have built the empire of Self-within and without. Only we have to live without doubt and scepticism, because we are only a dry leaf ' Astavakra samhita ' describes the nature of Mahatmas, as the non-sentimental existence- सदा सर्वत्र नीरस : ।

But an ordinary person bereft of Yoga is under delusion and darkness. That means there is distinction between Vidyā and Avidyā or between yoga and Viyoga The meaning of wisdom is not a limited concept applicable only to a few persons. But wisdom means knowledge of real existence of Self. We only have to know that we are in His existence and in His Kingdom to live as dry leaf. There is no distinction of Yoga and Viyoga, or of weak mind, and strong

mind because the yogis have created a bridge of Vidyā for the beneficence of millions of pure devotees of yoga. The bright and glowing words of wisdom of Mahatmas therefore, will certainly take the 'dry leaf' to its final destination !



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Tulsidasa's Rama

The great Historian Wincent A. S. Mith, in his book ' Akbar the Great Moghal ' writes, " Tulsidas is the tallest tree in the magic garden of medieval Hindu poesy. His name will not be found in Aine-Akbari or in the pages of Muslim Annalist or in the books of European authors based on the narratives of the Persian historians. Yet that (Hindu) was the greatest man of his age in India greater even than Akbar himself in as much as the conquest of the hearts and minds of millions of men and women effected by the poet was an achievement infinitely more lasting and important than any or all the victories gained in war by the Monarch ".

Sir George Griyarson says, " I give much less than the usual estimate when I say that fully ninety millions of people base their theories of moral and religious conduct upon his writings. If we take the influence exercised by him at the present time as our test, he is one of the three or four great writers of Asia. Over the whole Gangetic Valley his great work (The Ramayan) is better known than the Bible is in England. (Page 85, Indian Antiuary 1893)

Such was the influence of great saint Tulsidas. Though he wrote many books, all his fame was due to his most popular epic, " Ramacharit Manas ". When we try to describe his greatness, we always fall short of words as in the case of Marathi poet Sant ज्ञानेश्वर (Jnaneshwar). Great Aim, great source of enthusiasm and great poetic imagination when come together, great epics अक्षर वाङ्मय are created, Tulsidas's ' Ramcharit Manas " is such an epic. He himself has described it as छओ सास्त्र सब ग्रंथन को रस". His Rama is an ideal hero for the generation to come.

In उत्तरकांड of his Ramayan, while describing कलिधर्म's actually Tulsidas has described the state of affairs in the country in his own time. (Please see from उत्तरकांड दोहा 97, " सो कलिकाल कठिन उरगारी । पाप परायन सब नर नारी ।" upto दोहा 102 People were confused and were at loss to know what true religion was.

Due to Saint Kabir's influence people had lost faith in सगुण साकार and निर्गुण निराकार was out of their reach. So to re-establish their faith in सगुणोपासना Tulsidas had to repeat very often that अवधपति दशरथ's son was साक्षात परब्रह्म and was doing नरनाट्य to teach people about the morals and ideals of human life. In his Ramayan he has tried to answer all the questions that were hovering in people's mind. Parvati asks शिव (Shiv) here questions such as "All sages say that Rama is Brahman, The Ultimate Truth. You also are chanting 'Ram' nam राम नाम day and night. Please explain to me whether राम is Rama who was the son of Dasharath, the King of Ayodhya and अज, अगुण, अलक्ष्य, परब्रह्म are one and the same or are they different? If Rama is साक्षात परब्रह्म why was he weeping for his beloved wife like a common man?" So Tulsidas has made it very clear that His Rama is साक्षात परब्रह्म. In मंगलाचरण also he has said that–

'यन्मायावशवर्ति विश्वमखिलं ब्रह्मादिदेवासुरा
यत्सत्त्वादमृषैव भाति सकलं रज्जौ यथाहेर्भ्रमः।
यत्पादप्लवमेकमेव हि भवाम्भोधेस्तितीर्षावतां
वन्देऽहं तमशेषकारणपरं रामाख्यमीशं हरिम् ॥ ६ ॥

Rama is personified परब्रह्म Sita is Adi-Maya. She looks after and puts an end to the universe. उद्भव स्थिति संहार कारिणी She is Ram-Vallabhā रामवल्लभा) She does all this on the instructions of Rama.

In सगुणोपासना Dhyanyog (ध्यानयोग) is very important. So Tulsidas has often vividly described Lord Rama's beauty

and grandeur; for example 'भए प्रगट कृपाला' (बा. कां दोहा 192)

'नील सरोऊह नीलमनि नील नीरधर स्याम' (बा. कां. 146 दोहा) काम कोटि छबि स्याम सरीरा। नील कंज बारिद गंभीरा '(बा कां. दो 199) 'केकि कंठ दुति स्यामल अंगा। तडित बिनिंदक बसन सुरंगा। ब्याह बिभूषन विविध बनाए। मंगल सब सब भाँति सुहाए' (बा कां. 316 दोहा 316)

Rama was tall and blue-hued. He had a strong and magnificient physique. He was very handsome, lotus-eyed and his hands were so long as to reach upto his knees (आजानुबाहु). On his head he carried the pride and glory of Raghuvansh. His body was adorned with yellow satins and silks and his ornaments were glorified by his beauty. He was very polite and obedient. He had a sacred thread running across his left shoulder. All were stupefied and enchanted by his marvellous looks. His smile caste a magic spell which stole many hearts. He was God, the incarnation himself ! Nobody was like him and he couldn't be compared with anybody. *Ram was like Rama only.* He carried a bow of victory and arrows slung to shoulder. Even Shesh शेष Sharada (शारदा Ved were unable to describe Him. Then how can we? - निरूपम न उपमा आन राम समान रामु निगम कहे. (उत्तरकांड दो 92, छंद 1)

Devoted Son

Rama was very much devoted to his parents. Since childhood he was their most beloved child. His step mother Kaikeyi, when heard that Rama was to be crowned next day, was so happy that she offered Manthara, her necklace and said that if at all there is rebirth she wished that in next birth also Rama should be her son and Sita, her daughter-in-law. That shows how much she loved Rama.

Sumitra told Laxman that Sita-Rama were his mother and father and he should serve them with all his might so that they would not feel uncomfortable during their period of exile. What can we say about Kausalya? Rama was the apple of her eye. Her बहिश्चर प्राण, सर्वस्व ! Rama's father

Dasharath loved him so much that he could not keep himself alive without Rama and passed away chanting Rama's name on his lips. Rama, when saw that his father was torn in between सत्य and असत्य was in धर्मसंकट, willingly accepted वनवास and left Ayodhya for the sake of his father.

Loving Brother

Rama loved his brothers more than he loved himself. When he learned that dear Bharat was to be crowned as a king he was very happy. Bharat said that even in play Rama never liked that his brother would be defeated; so he used to take the defeat himself "मैं प्रभु कृपा रीति जियँ जोही । हारे हुँ खेल जितावहिं मोहि" (आयो. कां. 260 दो 8 चौ)

Rama was loved tremendously by his brothers. There were the closest ties of deep affection between Rama and Lakshman, Bharat and Shatrughna. when Guru Vasishta praised Bharat at Chitrakoot. Rama was very happy"गुर अनुरागु भरत पर देखी । राम हृदयं आनंदु बिसेषी" (अयो. कां. चौ. 1/दोहा 259)

At Chitrakoot Rama vowed in Vasishta's and Dasharath's name that in this world there never had been a brother like dear Bharat "नाथ सपथ पितृ चरन दोहाई। भयउ न भुअन भरतसम भाई ॥" (अयो. कां. दोहा 259 चौ. 4)

He had such a great faith and trust in Bharat that in presence of all he declared that he would do whatever Bharat would ask him to do "भरतु कहहिं सोइ किएँ भलाई। अस कहि राम रहे अरगाई" (अयो दो. 259 चौ 8)

Bharat always thought that he himself was Rama's humble servant and should not do or ask anything that would put Rama in an awkward position. So Bharat left the decision to Lord Rama and lived a hard ascetic life doing penance and ruling the Kingdom till Rama should return. In the history of the world this is a unique example

of noble and sacrificing brotherhood and selfless pure love for God !

Friend In Need

Guha was a chieftain of the tribes that had lived near the banks of Ganga. He had a great respect for Rama and considered himself as रामसेवक. But Rama embraced him like a friend and always honoured and loved him. Vanar raj Sugreeva and Ravana's brother Bibheeshan surrendered themselves to Rama's feet. Rama not only helped them in their needs but he honoured and accepted them as his beloved friends; and always carried out his duties as a true friend. In किष्किधाकांड Rama had described सन्मित्र लक्षणाs to Sugreeva and one can see that he practised them thoroughly throughout his life. In बालकांड we see that Rama used to honour his बालमित्राs also.

Obedient Disciple

Rama had great regards for Guru Vasishta and sage Viswamitra. Whenever in their company he always took their permission before doing anything and served both of them physically with great love and respect. When Rama first saw Sita in the royal garden (पुष्प वाटिका) he was attracted towards her. After that he told Viswamitra about every thing without hiding his emotions. राम कहा सब कौशिक पाहीं। सरल सुशिल छुअत छल नाहा।' Viswamitra was pleased with his straight forwardness and blessed him with following words. 'सुफल मनोरथ होहुँ तुम्हारे। राम लखनु सुनि भरे सुखारे Before धनुष्यभंग also 'गुरु पद बदि सहित अनुरागा। राम मुनिन्ह सन आयसू मागा' (बा. का दो 255 चौ. 4) "May all your wishes be fulfilled."

Not only Gurus but Rama gave respects to all elders. Sumant, King Janaka, all Sages in the forests even Jatayu was treated as if they were his parents.

Beloved Husband

In Tulsi Ramayan, Tulsidas has described the first meeting of Rama and Sita in पुष्पवाटिका प्रसंग It is an ideal example of संयत शृंगार. Rama was very sure about his own sentiments and told Lakshman that men who were born in Raghuvansh were never carried away in their emotions by Cupid or Kamdev towards other's wife. He felt sure that as he was attracted towards Sita, she was his would be wife. Sita was fully devoted to her husband and women of India still look upon her as their ideal. She was not ready to stay in Ayodhya without Rama and expressed her desire to go with him. Rama tried to pursue her that she should stay home and told her of the hardships of a life in the forest and tried to convience her that she should console his father and mothers. But when he saw that if he would leave her she would certainly die, he asked her to accompany him देखि दसा रघुपति जियँ जाना। हठि राखें राखिहि प्राना॥ अयो दोहा. 68 चोह)

In सुंदरकांड his message to Sita through Hanuman Rama described his deep love towards her in following words,

'तत्त्व प्रेम कर मम अरु तोरा। जानत प्रिया एकु मनु मोरा।
सो मनु सदा रहत तोहि पाहीं। जानु प्रीति रसु एतनेहि माहीं॥'

Tulsidas according to his Ramayan tells us that Rama had told real Sita to stay in Agni and she had kept her image प्रतिबिंब which was just like her in all the ways as Rama wanted to do नरलीला.

'सुनहु प्रिया ब्रत रुचिर सुसीला। मैं कुछ करबि ललित नरलीला।
तुम्ह पावक महुँ करहु निवासा। जौ लगि करौ निसाचर नासा'।
(अरण्य कां. 23 दोहा चौ. 12)

After Ravana's death when Sita was brought infrount of Rama, he spoke some bad words; so Sita had to enter fire to prove her purity

' सीता प्रथम अनत महुँ राखी । प्रगट कीन्हि चह अंतर साखी ।।'
' तेहि कारन करूना निधि कहे कछुक दुर्वाद ।'

Great Politician And Administrator

Rama was a born leader. All the brothers were trained in the arts of warfare and archery, in the Vedas and Upanishadas, politics and economics etc. Though all excelled in these princely qualites, Rama outshone his brothers in all spheres. He had steady devotion to duty and truth. He gives first priority to his duties : and all his devotees follow the same ideal. Vasishta had said

'नीति प्रीति परमारथ स्वारथु । कोड न राम सम जान जथारथु । '
अयो. दो. 254/5

But while performing their duties all of them very carefully preserve their intense and selfless love for each other.

Rama used to help his father in administration and while sending Bharat back he briefed him saying

' मुखिआ मुखु सो चाहिये खान पान कहुँ एक ।
पालइ पोषइ सकल अँग तुलसी सहित विवेक ।। आयो 315
' राजधरम सरबसु एतनोई । जिमि मन माहँ मनोरथ गोई ।

Before attacking Lanka Rama had sent Angada as his ambassador to give a last chance to Ravana, but in vain. After Ravana's death, He ordered Bibheeshana to perform last rites for Ravana. After Bali's death, he made Sugreeva King and Angada his *Yuvaraj*. He made Bibheeshan king of Lanka even before Ravana's death. This shows his greatness !

An Ideal Ruler

Tulsidas has drawn a very vivid picture of Rama-Rajya. Please see (उत्तरकांड दोहा 20/7 to दोहा 31 After his coronation he honoured all his friends who had fought for him

and who had come to Ayodhya for coronation with beautiful dresses and ornaments and praised them for their deeds, in front of all. Rama dearly loved his subjects and not only looked after their worldly welfare but guided them about their life's aim and cared about their मोक्ष (पारमार्थिक कल्याण) also. Where on the earth can we find such a kind & loving ruler?

We know that Rama even abandoned Sita for the sake of his subjects and he himself lived anascetic life. But Tulsidas has not described all this in his Ramayan. As it was very touchy incident he avoids it. Yet only by saying दुइ सुत सुंदर सीताँ जाए। लव कुस वेद पुरानन्ह गाए॥ he has simply indicated it.

Great Master

Hanuman first met Rama and Lakshmana in the guise of a brahmana; and at once was attracted towards them. By their speech he recognized them as his masters. His joy knew no bounds as he prostrated at Rama's feet.

Since then Hanuman was the main character in Ramayan. Rama knew that he was the person who could find Sita and so gave his ring to him. Hanuman with a tremendous zeal crossed the ocean, met Sita, burnt down Lanka and came back. Rama is 'तग्य कुतग्य अग्यता भजन' so he was very much pleased and expressed his feelings in following words,

'सुनु कपि तोहि समान उपकारी। नहिं कोउ सूर नर मुनि तनुधारी॥
प्रति उपकार करौं का तोरा। सनमुख होइ न सकत मन मोरा॥
सुनु सुत तोहि उरिन मैं नाहीं। देखेउँ करि बिचार मन माहीं॥
पुनि पुनि कपिहि चितव सुरत्राता। लोचन नीर पुलक अति गाता॥"
(सुंदरकांड दोहा 32/5 to 8)

Due to Hanuman Sugreeva and Bibheeshan came in contact with Rama. When Lakshman fainted Hanuman brought Sanjeevani. After returning to Ayodhya Rama first sent Hanuman to meet Bharat and he gave the news of

Rama's arrival. Thus Hanuman played the most important role in Ramayan. He was the most beloved servant of Rama and their relationship was such that couldn't be described in words.

In Tulsi Ramayan we get so may examples of supreme Bhaktas. Ahalya, Lakshman. Bharat, Sita, Guha, Kevat (केवट) Sharbhang, Sutikshana, Jatayu, Tribals of Chitrakoot, villagers on the way to forest, residents of Ayodhya and Mithila, all sages like Atri, Sharbhang. Sutikshna etc. are innumerable examples. Shabari and Kakbhushundi are also unique. All of them were blessed by Lord Rama. Shiva is a great devotee of Rama and Rama is of Shiva. When the bridge was built over the sea Rama established Shiv-ling at the sight and worshipped him. Rama says, "संकर भजन बिना नर भगति न पावइ मोरि' 'लिंग थापि बिधोवत करि पूजा। सिव समान प्रिय मोहि न दूजा॥" (लं. कां. दोहा 216)

Rama's Nature

Tulsidas's Rama was a strict follower of the truth. (He was एकवचनी, एकबाणी, एकपत्नी.) He spoke only once, used only one arrow and married only once. He was a born leader, best among men and always carefully protected the शास्त्रमर्यादा. So he was known as मर्यादा पुरूषोत्तम in the true sense of the word. He was a very brave and was welknown for his talents in archery. He could draw an arrow faster than the eye could see and aim it swift sure on the target.

Though brave and intelligent he was very polite, but he had self respect also. When Parshuram challenged him, Rama told him that Raghuvanshis were not afraid of death. If time would come they would face even Yama. He loved his सेवक's profoundly 'सब के प्रिय सेवक यह नीती। मोरे अधिक दास पर प्रीती' (उ कां. 16/8) Before leaving for forest he left his servants in the care of Guru Vasishta.

He was very much fond of pure love 'रामहि केवल प्रेम पिआरा। जान लेहि जो जाननिहारा'. In Rama we find equality and

equanimity both. He forgot and forgave faults of his devotees, irrespective of their caste, creed, age sex etc. He understood their feelings fowards himself and behaved accordingly. He didn't mind if he was insulted but if anybody insulted or hurt his devotee, he was not ready to excuse that person : रघुपति भगत भगति वस अहहिं' (अयो 265/3) Tulsidas had described Rama's equanimity in following words, 'प्रसन्नता या न गताभिषेकतस्तथा न मम्ले वनवास दुःखतः। मुखाम्बुजश्री रघुनन्दनस्य मे सदास्तु सा मञ्युलमङ्गलप्रदा। (अयो. श्लोक २)

It is very difficult to describe Rama's nature. At times he was more tough than वज्र and some times he was more tender than a flower-petal. Angada was very relucant to go to किष्किधा. He pleaded with eyes full of tears but Rama sent him back as Anagad was yuvaraj of किष्किधा. Yet when Hanuman told him Anagad's deep love Rama was moved 'मगन भए भगवंत' (लं. कांड)

Whenever Rama noticed that his devotee was overcome by pride, he at once took such steps as to remove it from devotee's heart. 'सुनहु राम कर सहज सुभाऊ। जन अभिमान न राखहिं काऊ॥' Narad, Garuda, and Kakbhushandi are main examples.

Rama told Bharat that people who did not expect from anybody but would give respect to everybody were his favourite 'सबहि मानप्रद आपु अमानी। भरत प्रानसम मम ते प्राणी॥ Rama was very generous. He told मनुशतरूपा (उ. कां 38/4) that there was nothing in this world that he could not give to his devotees 'सकुच विहाइ मागु नृप मोही। मोरे नहिं अदेय कछु तोही' (बा कां. दो 149)

A Divine Teacher

Like Shri Krishna Bhagwan, Rama is also जगद् गुरु. In Tulsi Ramayan we can see that time and again he preached religion to his devotees. He told his brothers that 'परहित सरिस धर्म नहि भाई। पर पीडा सम नहिं अधमाई' He

told 'रामगीता' to Lakshman, (अरण्य. दो 14-15-16), preached to Narad (अरण्य दोहा 43-44-45) to Shabari (अरण्य. कां. दोहा. 35-36 to Hanuman (सुं कांड-दोहा 3) to विभीषण Beebhishan (सुंदर. कां 47-48 and लका दोहा 80) to residents of Ayodhya (पुरजन गीता उ. कां. दोहा 44-45-46) and to Kakabhushundi (उ. कां. दोहा 84-85-86-87) These are same examples.

There is no limit to Rama's virtues, so how can I describe them in such a small article? I know quite well that many important points are left out. Readers should excuse me for that. I am thankful to the editor for giving me a chance to write these few lines and for the joy I got while going through 'Ramcharit Manas' for this sake.

Dr. Smt. Kamala. B. Vaidya

O O O

SELF AWARENESS I

Self effulgent and self-shining is the basic and fundamental knowledge of one-self in oneself. We need not hanker after an experience of sound and Light in our search for God and truth; nor are we to depend on anything as "ratio cognoscende" for self-knowledge and self-awareness. Why is man constantly striving hard to attain 'Vidyā' or self-knowledge by numerous yogic and religious practices? Why is man in search of words, thoughts, and their construction to obtain the ever-present knowledge? The answer isn't simple, for it refers to 'Avidya' and 'Mula Avidyā' of oneself. Scriptures only show the self-effulgent nature of Truth and 'Vidyā'. Man bound by desires and 'vasanas', man in his ignorance of himself as Lord Shiva, imagines a vast ocean of existence; and then begins to dive deep in 'Self', hoping to arrive at the imaginary and false 'Eldorado' - The land of solace 'Here and now', in an unambiguous way, and in perfection of existence one has to know oneself as the substratum of knowing mind I

Amritanubhava

(Ecstacy of Life Realised)

Amritanubhava – a book written by the well-known Saint Dnyaneshwar, is very little known, even to most of his devotees, whereas, his other book Dnyaneshwari, which is a lengthy commentary on Shreemat Bhagwat—Geeta, is widely read all over Maharashtra. Most of the saints' devotees read a portion of this book, as part of their daily ritual. Being a masterpiece of Marathi literature, it has become a classic in Marathi language. After he completed writing this famous book, Nivrittinath, the elder brother of the saint, asked the saint to write a book, about his own experience, as to how he attained emancipation. The saint was a mukta or a liberated soul, since his own chilldhood as he had not to pass through bodily tortures of long spells of meditation, to attain his freedom; even the saints like Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Gautam Buddha had to pass through these travails: on thus being advised by his elder brother the saint then wrote this book Amritanubhava which means experience of the ecstasy of his free, liberated life.

This book describes how the protion of universal life, splits itself in two parts and becomes the cause of creation of human being, but gets itself involved in its own creation and the way by which it can find Its own freedom and be absorbed back in the cosmic energy, from where it has emerged. The book is a detailed analysis of human mind, its functioning through thoughts and images and of words and speech, a man makes use of in his daily life, and their limitations. It also shows the way of emptying the consciousness, to attain final emancipation, through the help of Nivritti or negation. Nivritti is the name of the elder brother of the saint, who also was the Saint's guide or Guru. The saint has successfully made use of the meaning of his elder brother's name by negating the entire image

of the world, as reflected in his mind, and emptying his consciousness, so as to receive pure cosmic energy.

The book is a pure exposition of the advait philosophy of the vedant, as realised by the saint in his own personal life, for the saint condemns mere knowledge of any kind as obstruction in the way of self-realisation. The book does not begin, with any traditional prayer to Lord Ganapati, Devi Saraswati or any other deity. The book is not based on any scripture, as it is an outcome of his own experience of self realisation. It is a great treasure for those, who are earnest about their liberation, but do not want to depend on any outside agency for the same. It points out the shortest way to self-realisation by having an insight in the sport, the cosmic energy plays in the creation of the world and gets itself involved in the process.

Amritanubhava, opens with Mangalacharan or prelude, consisting of five verses, written in Sanskrit language, while the rest of the ten chapters that follow are written in Marathi language, to enable ordinary people to read and understand the contents of the book. The saint was one of the few, who broke the tradition of writing books in Sanskrit language, which only the learned few could understand.

In this mangalacharan, the saint makes a total surrender, to that universal life force, which he says, evades any description in words, and which is ecstasy personified. He names it, as negation, meaning thereby, that this life-force negates the entire world of from, thought and image. He further says that this life-force, at the time of creation splits in two parts, one of the parts being male Purush or Shiva, and other female, Stri or Shakti. The human being and the world around springs from the division of this life energy. These two divided parts are unceasingly sporting together, the male part, being inactive and observer but the real force behind the female part. The female part is active and goes on

creating and expanding the world and getting itself involved, in this process. It is difficult to identify these two parts, separately as they are constantly intermingling together. The whole life of human being is merely a sport, between these two parts, emerged from Universal Life energy and has absolutely no concern, with the outside world, in which Shakti or female part. apparently gets involved. It is the understanding of this subtle play and integration of these two divided parts of life energy, that enables the human being, to merge back in the universal life energy and be free.

The book begins with the description of the sport of these separated parts of life energy. This division is sustained through continuous flow of thoughts and images, with constitute the mind of the human being; thus the human is born and thus he dies, always involved in the circle of pleasure and pain, owing to the play of this duality. The second chapter is most important, as it points out the way to get out of this net, the man has woven round himself. The man who is earnest about his liberation or mukti, has to understand the play of these divided parts of cosmic energy, in whose hands he has merely become a tool. He is merely revolving on the machine of the mind. The means to understand is to have an insight in the game of these divided parts of cosmic energy and to negate the continuous flow of thoughts and images, that flow in his mind. The consciousness of man is nothing but the seat of these thoughts and images, that occupy his mind. These thoughts and images are nothing more than the reflection of the outside world, as he understands it. All that he has to do is to negate them. These upsurges of thoughts and images and to power to negate them are both inside himself. Thus, he is his own guide and desciple as well. The human being has no need to take any outside help for his salvation. If he goes on negating, everything that arises inside the mind, then at a certain point of time there will remain nothing, for negation and the mind of the man, will be totally empty, to receive the cosmic energy. His ego will be dissolved as salt in the sea, the divided parts, as Shiva and Shakti will integrate and merge into

cosmic energy, from which they have emerged. The individual will be reduced to a zero. His body, mind, intelligence will only be a medium through which this cosmic life energy, will express itself; the seer will be the seen. His whole life will be as if, he is only alone and playing with himself.

Some chapters that follow describe the source of words and speech, the man makes use of in his daily life, their use and limitations. Then he goes on to describe, what Sat, Chit, Anand, meaning reality, energy and joy is in negative terms, because they elude any positive description. One chapter is devoted entirely to describe how knowledge of any kind is an obstruction in the path of realisation, because of the inherent capacity of man to understand Avidya or ignorance. The liberated man gets an insight, which helps him to live with freedom and ecstasy from moment to moment, as past disappears and the life renews itself, every moment.

The saint concludes his book with a beautiful description of his own liberated life, which is nothing but universal cosmic energy. He is inside as well as outside the body. The observer has become the observed. Every thing that is heard, seen and smelt, is nothing but his own self, the sense of separation from the outside world has vanished. In the end, he says, there was no purpose left even to write this book; but light of cosmic energy is taking the form of words, to enable people to free themselves and enjoy their own lives, as he is doing.

– Madhao Deo

Shiva-awareness शिव-प्रज्ञा

India is a holy land of Shiva – The supreme Light of wisdom shining in many mountains and temples. In short description the vast Agamic literature can be summarised as 'Hridayam', Shiva-awareness ! On the holy night of Maha-shivaratri, as Bhagavan has shown, there appeared the column of Light; and was worshipped by all the Gods, who went round the column of Light in reverance. In 'Agamic Language, yoga is the perception of the entire Universe as Light, at the time of union of 'Hara' and 'Gauri'–''Haragouri Samyogat''. All these metaphysical truths proclaim that God is reality,-both ontological and Epistemological, in the highest mystical experience of yoga and wisdom (Jnāna). But the ordinary reader of Darshana 'sastra'–Philosophy, (a layman) is unaware of the mystery of God and His existence, even though there are numerous occasions of Grace, miracle and the sense of 'The numinous'. It is not easy to prove the existence of God-or of Shiva Consciousness, either by refering to traditional arguments, or to Holy scriptures and their authority, for the simple reason that God-awareness is beyond the realm of language, description and symbolism. For an ardent believer in His existence, and in His power of manifestation in the form of mystery or miracle, there is no logical or metaphysical problem. He the ordinary man of faith and belief, is blessed man of inner joy and delight, with the simple utterence of God's various names, and mantras. He only experiences a problem of logical difficulty when he tries to explain the concept of God to other interlocutors and opponents. Atheist is a blissful man for all arguments go in his favour for it is easy to denounce God. When God plays hide and seek to a believer or to a quasi-thinker, there is no rational ground to establish existence of ubiquitous principle. Even logical thinkers and metaphysicians are in the dark cloud of doubt because God-awareness is not an experience of Shiva-awareness. The

greatest logical difficulty of Shiva-consciousness is its contradictory nature of immanence as heart-awareness, and transcendence as supreme consciousness. To think of some principle is not to believe it; and to believe in its existence is not to experience it. As heart awareness, and as yogic experience of mystery beneath all mystery, Shiva-consciousness is non-mental awareness of pure existence. (In philosophical discussions, names, labels and systems play the role of misunderstanding and misinterpretation).

What is meant in this discussion is that the all-pervasive Heart awareness is yoga 'par excellence' And at the same time, Shiva-consciousness is basis of experience 'now and here'. Even as basis of time and space, even as basis of unity of mental awareness, there is God-or Shiva unproved and indescribable, (although as a meaningful and intelligible principle of Iness-the Aham). Men can climb the ladder of any path, practice or penance; and can experience pure awareness, both as a starting point and as an apex of mystical experience-the 'alpha and omega' of self-awareness and pure experience. There is no farther shore of this vast ocean of inner heart awareness, because 'Iness' as agent of experience arises from the ocean of Shiva awareness, and frequently drowns in this vast ocean of Heart, (with or without the knowledge of yogic-experience) i. e. Heart awareness-'Sat-Chit-Ananda'.

Following the scriptures and purānas, a pure-minded devotee may often experience the holy presence of God-Hara or Hari, and he may even find a miracle taking place in accordance with his strong and determined will. But the logical error of God-experience or vision is that it lacks objectivity, and verification. What is the need of proving existence or manifestation of God to a strong mind of sage who is fortified fortress of 'aforteriori' rationality? Who is God other than oneself? How and When is He to appear in space and time, being Himself above space and Time? Logic stops, and thinking is suspended when we closely observe mystery of God-experience and vision, by wise men of religion, as portrayed in History of Religion, But there

is truth in all matters of religion pertaining to intervention of God in day-to-day matters. In Science too one has to rise above its limitations to explain truth of higher mind of masters, and messaihs. Myth is no description of events of higher psychology and yogic experience. So God in a dynamic sense has been both the efficient cause and formal cause of creation. He is the Purusha' and also the efficient and dynamic cause of all natural phenomena, including ego.

Man from millenia of years of history has been labouring under the impression that God intervenes in our daily action, and shows His parental love and Grace to redress our difficulties. God is truth both as a person and also as Universal Power. There is nothing in the course of history of religion and ethics to disprove the benevolence and Grace of God. But to positively affirm God and his existence on the strength of any mysterious phenomena, obviating universal principle of consciousness, would be neither scientifically tenable, nor acceptable for a rational mind. What is the fallacy in accepting God as the parental presence in worldly matters? Man accepts many theories and functions of God, and throws them over-board, with the passage of time. In short the march of doctrinnaire approach to God is beset with many logical errors. When man perceives the weakness of argument, and reacts against the fallacious theories in science and philosophy, there begins the domain of doubt-the hunting ground for hounds of scepticism. When we accept God-awareness as Shiva-awareness, and know its universal and ubiquitous nature there is no room for logical fallacy and irrational argument.

God and His attributes are amply mentioned in the enormously vast literature of Religion and philosophy. In this discussion the stress is not on the concept of God or His nature, but it is an essay on God-conscionsness which as pure awareness is seated in the heart-lotus of all people -the layman and the wise. O Lord ! Thou art famous for Thy union with the meek poor and the humble, sings Sri Ramana Maharshi in 'Five Hymns' In this way, in the vast

expanse of God-consciousness and also in the generality of connotation and meaning of God-consciousness there is a reference to experience of every common man who is away from metaphysical jargon. We write without much technicality or metaphysics, about the nature of God or God awareness, firstly to eomphasize pure heart experience and secondly to avoid the general misunderstanding of regarding this as the mystical or higher experience, known only to the intellectuals and academicians. (May be experience is the antithesis of book learning and pedagogy) Every one generally has inner experience of joy, delight peace, tranquility and mental composure, on the occasions of aggreable transactions of body and mind. Secondly man has intuitive experiences which defy temporal and spatial barriers. All these are pertaining only to inner depth of psychical experience of subtle-ego. Even the vision of God or audition of some sound occuring in subtle body is only a matter of subtle vibrations deep within subtle body and psychic centres. Shiva-consciousness is not proved or established by these states of Self hypnotism and casual introversion of mind. Beneath all mental vibrations, experience and yogic feelings. and also beneath all ego-changes, there is the continuous and unchanging 'Iness', the heart of ego, which alone is a reality; and it is nameless experience and unalloyed bliss. This is awareness. To describe the nature of nucleus of awareness with any symbolism or words is not possible even for a yogi. Shiva consciousness, as purana declares, wasn't possible even for Goddess Umā, in its purity of self-awareness. What a wonder! The pure awareness is both a personal and simple experience deep within the heart-layers of common man; and at the same time, a yogi devoted to various practices is unaware of heart-lotus. In India, in south or in north, there have been the yogis and masters; but not so in any other country. The scripture and holy places are rich with spiritual wealth and wisdom unparalleted in history of any nation. As a result of frequent appearance of epoch-making sages and savants. people in large numbers are devoted to Religion and Philosophy. But under the influence of science and western culture, now

people are slowly drifting towards materialism and scepticism. God-awareness taken in its pure form and logicality appeals to theists and atheists alike, because all the scriptures suggest a kind of introspection and introversion as the scientific method for knowledge of self and God. To distinguish between religion and blasphemy, or between Rationalism and Empiricism, in the context of jnāna and Upanisadic philosophy, is anly an ignorance coupled up with historicism (which is taken only in its evil aspect). The theories and doctrines made a dominant appearance in the classical view of Darshana Sastra. But in modern times, in the period of twentieth century-thanks to science and Industry-man is drawn to core problems of psychology, hygience and social welfare. The new awakening in Indian 'Darshan' is the motivation to meditation Enquiry and self inquiry. So in religious literatures of Gita and Upanisads, and also in social field of awakening blessed by Vivakananda, Sri Paramahansa. Sri Aurobindo, Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Gopinath Kaviraj, Yoga touches the psychic centres of all mendicants and sadhakas showing the reorientation of philosophy to practical beneficence. Man with his pure mind and intellect sits in the centre of any truthfnl investigation of soul, psyche and self. This is truly the modernity of philosophy of wisdom, Vidyā, Welfare and verity. We find on close observations that all mystical and intuitive perceptions are nothing else than illusions of weak mind. Psychology of introversion shows the abysm of depth of awareness in the aspect of ideas and imaginations. Man is subject to variety of impressions coming from body, viscera, society, etc. (and some desires and vasanas are present from past lives). Mental awareness is not God awareness, for it is purely subjective aspect of awareness, caricatured by evil tendencies and egocentricism. Man for major part of experience is bound by ego and desires, and he is not free to know himself. In this sense ego plays a dominant role is fabrication of world images and pictures. Mind is never freed from its own shackles and bondages. But in the yogic practices of jnānayoga mind patterns and tendencies of subtle mind are totally removed in the sacred process of mental purification. But in common experience

or in less important Sādhanas, man is self-hypnotised and self-deceived. To know the enslavement of mind to desires and vāsanas, and then to know that God shines supreme in heart in non-mental awareness, is the real meaning of modern yoga. There have been many mysterious appearances of masters of jnanayoga, theosophy and philosophy, and both in India and elsewhere, to guide man on the noble path of shiva-consciousness or Heart awareness. But laity is never impressed by the seemingly non-religious nature of modenrn saints and savants. No one has ever denied the value and importance of religion. Only some wise men have shown us the highest evolution of religious mind. God awareness is thus the result of evolution of reason and intellect.

Please be religious, and be throughly religious in outlook, for God-awareness seeks no distinction between names ideas and worldviews. To live with fullness of morality and beauty of art and aesthetics, and to live as the full man of flowering of supreme religion in Heart and mind, is the golden rule of wise man. By Guru's Grace we learn to live through all phantasmagoria of variety of colours, pictures and dogma. If there is theory of ethical discipline, it is good for purification, and if there is a theory of metaphysics, as monism or dualism to cast light on mental problem of body-mind duality, it is a preface to purity of mind. Let there be the drama of plurality or of illusion. But 'I ness' as the central point of awareness is never lost in gamut of cognitions and perceptions. This unchanging pivotal point of pure mind is 'Isvara'-'Hridayam'.

"Alam Vistarena" अलं विस्तरेण। Enough of elaboration. In fine it can be stated that God consciousness is Heart awareness, and shiva-consciousness, which is untouched by definitions and descriptions, and by ideas and names. It is pure awareness हृदयं। Heartl All systems, paths and disciplines are meaningfully integrated in Heart awareness. It is repository of all yogas; and it is substratum of yoga and psychology of religious experience. Here we find reconcilliation between religion and science, between

yoga and psychology, or between materialism and mentalism. In a way Heart-awareness is a 'rapproachment' between east and west or between mind and matter, and also between theism and atheism. One is self-conscious as spontaneously as one is conscious of one's body and cognitions of visual field. The screen of perception and the ground of all change and cognition is the real ' I ' ness'– the unchanging awareness – प्रज्ञानघन By Guru's Grace the troubled problems of Ethics and Philosophy are solved by and disolved into pure-awareness – The supreme awareness deep within. Philosophy then has to be the wisdom of man as his heart-awareness or pure-awareness.

Prof T. F. Bidari

O O O

HOW SIMPLE !

As we read the scriptures, and probe into the nature of God and Self as suggested there in, we do not really experience Light and sound. The layman is all the more unfamiliar with yogic terms and mystical experiences. There is a tantalising intermediary stage between God-awareness and the start of 'great Journey of Devotion'. Mind is held in check; and all thoughts are needless and fruitless as they are held in complete abeyance. No thought arises in mind to make us aware of this blankness (After all it is blankness). The blessed devotees are moved by presence of Guru-the master, who is wisdom 'Par-excellence'. But the rest of meditators are heavily weighed down by doubt and despair. The main experience of Truth within as central awareness is never lost to man, whether there is yogic experience or not. To know oneself as centre of awareness, there is no need of magical touch of Master,-one has only to know oneself as the knower of self !

A Glimpse of Gurudev

1. Calm and serene he radiated joy

[Dear Subscriber,

We are much pleased to inform you the inclusion in this issue (also in the forthcoming issues) the extracts from Gurudev Ranade's writings. Shri Gurudev Ranade a profound scholar, a philosopher and a mystic needs no introduction to our readers There is no dearth of scholars and scholarly books on philosophy, religion, and mysticism; but what differentiates Gurudev's books from those scholarly books and treatises is that Gurudev wrote them only in the light of his deep insight into the subject, with his power of vision and the highest faculty of perception of the subtlest of the subtle, as perceived by rishis of all times This adds a singular unique feature to the vast literature that Gurudev turned out in his life time

Honestly, we feel, reading literature like this one, will definitely drive home precisely 'that' readers are seeking so painstakingly With an earnest intention of sharing the best of Gurudev and even participating in the divine ecstasies that Gurudev used to experience, we include extracts from the ocean of wealh that Gurudev has left behind for the posterity. No doubt, our esteemed subscribers, would welcome this whole heartedly.

It is very natural for us to have a sincere curiosity to know more about the multifaceted personality of luminaries like Gurudev Ranade To fulfill this genuine need of the readers, with this issue, we continue to include a glimpse of Gurudev Ranade as seen and felt by his students, disciples, and by usual and casual visitors No doubt, this will reveal only a tip of the iceberg, since larger portion

of the iceberg is Unseen-which cannot be seen by this pair of our eyes; for, to know Gurudev, is to be Gurudev !]

My first meeting with Prof. Ranade was purely accidental; but it still remains one of the most charming memories which I cherish dearly. It was some time late in 1927, I think. Prof. Ranade got into a first class compartment at Jabalpur one evening on his way to Nagpur. The narrow meter-gauge train is one of the most rickety and uncomfortable trains ever designed by human genius. It is known as the " Boneshaker " ; it jolts in the most unexpected manner and, if you are not careful, it may throw you off your berth. Prof. Ranade appeared to have accepted the erratic performance of the ram-shackle train with philosophic calm. His health was none too robust and he knew that the chances of a good night's rest were remote for him; they would be even in a more comfortable train. He spread his scanty bed on a lower berth and sat cross-legged in immaculately white " dhoti " [1] and " kurta " [2] while his long coat and turban hung on one of the pegs and his " Puneri jode " [3] lay on the floor in front of him ready to accommodate, when required, his dainty little feet which, I learnt later, were touched reverently by hundreds of his grateful disciples and admirers.

I entered the compartment when the train was about to start. I did not know Prof. Ranade nor had I ever heard about him. However, I was deeply impressed by his quiet, serene and dignified presence and I bowed to him in courtesy. I had just finished my education in London and was back at home in search of a job which in those days was a difficult one to get. I had played hard tennis in the evening and had a good dinner at home. I was naturally sleepy and although we were the only two in the compartment I preferred the upper berth in front of Prof, Ranade lest I should be disturbed by the incoming passengers during the night journey. Hardly I had stretched myself, I was lost in the sweet land of sleep.

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1. Loin cloth. 2. Sh rt.
3. A variety of red shoes typical of Poona of yesteryears.

The berths in the miserable train were narrow; too narrow to allow a lusty, tired youth to fling about the dangling parts of his anatomy in the various dimensions in the oblivion of deep sleep. Time and again my legs or hands would be hanging out of the upper berth; perhaps one goodly jolt and I would be flat on floor. I was too far gone in sleep to be aware of the inexorable operation of the law of gravitation; but the kind professor, who unfortunately could neither sleep nor read because of the dim lights and unceasing jolts, kept a constant vigil over me. He got up every time he feared danger of my being tossed out and pushed my heavy unruly limbs back into the berth. He did this exercise all through the night; but the beneficiary was totally unware of care and attention he received from one of the most eminent thinkers in the country. As is wont with me, I got up early in the morning rushed into the toilet and emerged fresh after a shave and a bath. Now we got talking for the first time. We were still strangers to each other. He was as quiet and serene as ever. He told me how very much he admired my sleep and what he had done for me during the night. I was deeply touched by his kindness. I felt as grateful as guilty.

We changed at Gondia and got into a better train this time. We were again the two in one compartment and we both settled down to read in the train. I took out a copy of the philosophical journal, the ' Mind ' to read : this naturally attracted the attention of Prof. Ranade and he enquired of me who I was and how I happened to be interested in philosophy. Slowly and with unfailing charm and sincerity he started asking me questions one after another. Little did I realise that I was in for another viva voce examination. How delighted he was when he learnt that I was a student of Prof. G Dawes Hicks, one of the top-most thinkers of the age. His questions led me unsuspectingly, to Moore, Wittgenstein, Susan Stebbing, Alexander, Russell and to others in the reigning galaxy of the period. He made me recall some of the most fascinating philosophical problems of the Greek philosophy, the obsessions of medieval scholastc logic, the new fields into which Broad and other thinkers were leading us to. I would have felt offended

if it had appeared to me that this man was trying to size me up or to locate my weakness. The impression, which I carry to this day, is that he was enjoying himself and was trying to appreciate how much I enjoyed thinking on philosophical problems. The unscheduled interview came to an end when we reached Nagpur. I had by now come to know who Prof. R. D. Ranade was. I had found a loving senior and a guide, a sincere and humane friend. Our association lasted till he lived.

I heard his lectures at Nagpur. Once he did me the honour of staying with me for a day at Nagpur. I recall his loving presence at home and how he radiated joy to everybody he came in contact with, by his very simple way of life. He was fond of tea; he could do with it every half an hour throughout the day. Whenever I went to Allahabad I called on him and every time I met him I had to have several cups of tea and to undergo a subtle viva voce examination which I believe was reserved only for those whom he favoured.

I was sad when I heard that he was no more. I had the luxury of having spent a few quiet and joyful hours with him. The sense of void is still there; how very much the students of philosophy today need the inspiration and guidance of such an honest, independent and clear thinker as Prof. R. D. Ranade. Giants in the world of philosophy are rare.

[Extract taken from 'Glimpses of Gurudev', a Publication of Academy of Comparative Philosophy & Religion, Belgaum]

O O O

We generally show devotion to God and try to live a peaceful life of piety It is a general method of religious and spiritual descipline, by the Grace of God and Guru! Then follow total Silence of mind and indifference to the world—That is Nijānanda

Self Realisation I*

—by Gurudev Ranade

INTIMATIONS OF SELF-REALISATION

1. Philosophy is to Mysticism as Knowledge is to Being

In a previous Chapter we have seen how the Upanishadic seers arrived at the conception of a unitary Ātman who fills the whole world of nature as of mind, from whom the world comes into being, in whom the world lives, and into whom the whole world is finally absorbed. It is this conception of Ātman which we saw to be the quintessence of the philosophical teachings of the Upanishads; it is this conception which enables us to bridge over the disputes between the various contending theological schools; and finally, it is this conception which gives a proper place to the various constructions of reality in the ultimate explanation of things. We also suggested in that Chapter that the Upanishads afforded a practical lesson for the realisation of Atman. They are not content with merely constructing an intellectual explanation of Reality, but suggest means for the practical attainment of it. It is true that, in the very nature of things, the problem of Self realisation could not be expected to be expounded in a deliberate fashion by the Upanishadic Seers. They only throw hints and suggest the way for realising the Self, only too cognizant of the fact that any description of the great mystic experience by word of mouth would fall short of reality, as much as any mediate, intellectual, or expressible knowledge would fall short of immediate, intuitive, first-hand experience. There is the same gulf between the expression of an experience and the enjoyment of it, as there is between knowledge and being. Never-

theless, mystic experience has itself to be suggested and communicated in a concealed fashion so as to enable the seekers after mystic life in their otherwise dark journey to know the lamp-posts on the mystic way. It is thus that we find in the various Upanishads mystical intimations of the realisation of the Self, which are hidden like jewels beneath an intellectual exterior, and which he alone who has the eye for them can discern to be of immeasurable value.

2. The Lower Knowledge and the Higher Knowledge

The Upanishadic seers fully realise the fact that no amount of mere intellectual equipment would enable us to intuitively apprehend Reality. They draw the same distinction betweed Aparā, Vidyā and Parā Vidyā, between lower and higher knowledge, as the Greek phillosophers did between Doxa and Episteme, between opinion and truth. The Mundakopanishad tells us that there are two different kinds of knowledge to be known, one the higher, the other, the lower knowledge. Of these the lower knowledge. is the knowledge of the Vedas, of grammar, of ctymology, of metre, of the science of the heavens; while the higher knowledge is that by which alone the imperishable Being is reached (S. I. a.). The same typical distinction between the way of knowledge and the way of realisation is brought out in a conversation between Nārada and Sanatkumār, where Nārada, the spiritual disciple, goes to his Teacher to learn the science of realisation. Asked to say what branches of knowledge he has hltherto studied, Nārada tells Sanatkumāra that he has studied all the Vedas, as well as all history and mythology; he has studied the science of the manes, mathematics, the science of portents, the science of time, logic, ethics, the science of the gods, the Brahman, the science of the demons, the science of weapons, astronomy, as well as the science of charms, and fine arts. But he tells his master that grief fills him that so much knowledge is not competent to land him beyond the ocean of sorrow. He has studied only the different Mantras; but he has not known the Self. He has known erewhile from persons revered like his Spiritual Teacher that he alone is able to go beyond the ocean of sorrow who can cross it by

the saving bund of Atman. Would his Spiritual Teacher enable him to cross over the ocean of ignorance and grief? (S. I. b). This passage brings into relief the distinction between the lower knowledge and the higher knowledge, ānd sets the knowledge of Self on such a high pedestal indeed that all intellectual knowledge seems to be merely verbal jugglery, or an utter weariness of the flesh, as contrasted with it. Finally, the extremely practical character of the Upanishadic Seers towards the problem of Self-realistion is exhibited in the Kenopanishad where we are told that the end of life may be attained only if the Self were to be realised even while the body lasts: for if Self-knowledge dose not come while the body lasts, one cannot even so much as imagine what ills may be in store for him after death (S. 2. a). The same idea is urged with a slightly different emphasis in the Kathopanishad, where we are told that unless a man is able to realise the Self while the body lasts, he must needs have to go from life to life through a series of incarnations (S. 2. b).

3. Qualifications for self-realisation

The question now arises – if the Atman is capable of being realised even while the body lasts, why is it that all people do not realise him in their life-time, or yet again if he can be realised by some, what can we regard to be their qualifications for that realisation? The Upanishads abound in references to the qualifications necessary for the spiriual life. The first quality requisite for a spiritual aspirant is, the Kathopanishad tells us, introversion . " Our senses have been created by God with a tendency to move outwards. It is for this reason that man looks outside himself rather than inside himself. Rarely a wise man, who is desirous of immortal life, looks to his inner Self with his eye turned inwards " (S. 3. a). The same out-moving tendency of the senses is emphasised in the Śvetāśvataro-panishad, where we are told that the individual self lives pent up in its citadel of nine doors with a tendency to flutter every time outside its prison-house (S. 3. b). In order to bend the wand to the other extreme, it thus seems necessary for the spiritual aspirant at the outset to entirely

shut himself up to the outside world so as to be able to look entirely within himself. This is the stage of introversion. After ' introversion "comes" catharsis. " The Kathopanishad tells us that unless a man has stopped from doing wrong, unless he has entirely composed himself, it may not be possible for him, however highly - strung his intellect may be, to reach the Self by force of mere intellect (S. 4 a). The Mundakopanishad insists upon truth and the life of penance, right insight and the life of celibacy, as essential conditions the for the unfoldment of the Self within us (S. 4. b). The Kathopanishad brings into relief the non-intelleclual, in the sense of the super-intellectual, character of Self-realisation, when it declares that the Self can be reached neither by much discourse, nor by keen intellect, nor by polymathy (S.4.c). The Iśāvāsyopanishad in a very famous passage indicates the same logophobie as in the Kathopanishad, when it tells us that knowledge is even more dangerous than ignorance, in as-much as thoss who pursue the path of ingorance go after death to a region of pitchy darkness, while those who pride themselves upon their possession of knowledge go to greater darkness still (S.4.d). The Muṇḍakopanishad points out that the Ātman cannot be realised by a man who has not sufficient grip and tenacity to lead the severe life of spirituality, nor can he be reached by a man whose life is a bundle of errors (S. 4. e.) The same Upanishad gives further characteristics of the life of Self-realisation. "Unless a man feels disgusted with the worlds to which his actions may bring him. and unless he belives firmly that the world which is beyond the reach of actions can never be obtained by any actions howsoever good, " unless, in other words, he regards the life of Self-realisation as uniquely superior to the life of action, "he has no right to enter into the spiritual world. To seek which he must forthwith go in a humble spirit, fuel in hand to a Spiritual Teachr who has realised the Self"(S.4.f.) We thus see that, for the realisation of the Self, the Upanishad s inculcate a life of introversion, with an utter disgust for the world and catharsis from sins, a spirit of humbleness, and a life of tranquillity, truth. penance, insight strength and right pursuit. Unless these conditions are fulfilled,the aspirant after spiritual life may never hope to realise the Self.

4 Necessity of Initiation by a Spiritual Teacher

When the equipment in moral virtues is thus being perfected, the next step in the path of Self-realisation is initiation by a worthy Spiritual Teadher. Time and oft have the Upanishads insisted upon the necessity of initiation by a Guru. Satyakāma in the Chhāndogya Upanishad, is merely voicing the opinions of many when he tells his teacher that he has heard erewhile from people as revered as his own spiritual teacher that unless one be initiated by a Guru in the path of Self-realisation, one cannot attain the goal of mystic life (S. 5. a). The Kathopanishad believing in the natural descent of spiritual knowledge from a higher to a lower level tells us that "unless the spiritual teacher be really of a superior calibre, spiritual knowledge would be hard of attainment, and again, that unless the initiation comes from a Spiritual Teacher who has realised his identity with the Self, there can be no knowledge of the subtle path which transcends all power of logic and argumentation. Let us not divert our intellect into wrong ways by mere logic-chopping; for, how can we hope to attain to the knowledge of Ātman unless we are initiated by another"? (S. 5. b). "Arise," says the same Upanishad in another passage, "Awake and learn from those who are better than ye; for the path of realisation is as hard to tread as the edge of a razor. Very wisely have sages called it an inaccessible path" (S. 5. c). These and other passages make it clear that the knowledge of Self could not be attained by an individual striving for himself on his own behalf; for, we are told, the knowledge is so subtle and mystic that nobody could by his own individual effort ever hope to attain it. Secondly, it is necessary that the Teacher to whom we go to seek wisdom must have realised his identity with the ultimate Self. For, unless the Teacher has realised such an idnetity, unless, in other words, he stands on the lofty pedestal of unitive experience, the knowledge which he can impart can never be expected to be fructified in any individual who receives it. Doubt has oftentimes been expressed as to the necessity of having a spiritual teacher from whom to learn spiritual wisdom. Why, it is contended, may we not

hope to attain it by reference to books ? Persons who put forth this objection must remember what Plato said about the comparative value of the knowledge to be obtained from books, and the knowledge to be obtained from a teacher by word of mouth. The first is entirely lifeless; the second is the outcome of the full-fledged life of the master. This makes all the difference in the world; for, books can never be expected to solve the actual difficulties in the path of Self-realisation, while a Teacher who has walked on the path may take his aspiring disciple from step to step on the ladder of spiritual perfection.

(To be continued)

*[*Extract taken from 'Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy'.]*

[Courtesy : Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay]

O O O

Sri Rāma

1) *To live with ethical discipline and heroic mind, freed from lust greed and jealosy, is to follow the ideal of Sri Rama !*

2) *To be a success in Social and Administrative life, and to eschew all evil of mind, following the teachings of sage, means devotion to Sri Rama.*

3) *Sri Rama, the ideal of human of life, is the eternal Self-Swātmārāma !*

Book Review

'THE ADVAITA VIEW OF GOD' By Dr. Sangamlal Pandey Published by Darshana Peeth Allahabad PP 68 Price Rs. 70/-

The Book is published in the 'Allahabad Philosophical series, is the eleventh. Dr. S. L. Pandey in his scholarly way, has presented a detailed account of place of God in Advaita system. He delivered six lectures on concept of God in Pune and Ahmadabad, in presence of eminent philosophers like K. H. Shah of Karnatak University, Prof. S. S. Barlinge, Dr. J. A. Yajnik of Gujarat University and others. The response was appreciation of the logical method and consistency of matter. He puts with masterly touch the classical theories into new logical framework-' old wine in new bottles'. As a senior professor of philosophy, he shows in this work his command on Indian philosophy by his selective reference to Upanishads, Tripura Rahasya, Amalananda, Gaudapada, Appayya Dixit, Sankara Vācāspati etc. The first three lectures which were arranged in July 1983 under the auspices of 'Gurudev Ranade Smarak Vyakhyanamala,' Pune, reveal the clear acccount of 'Tarka Vedanta,' as distinguished from 'Yoga Vedanta' and 'Bhakti Vedanta'. 'God is the real import of all Upanisadic statement', he opines (vide page. 3) Unity and existence of God are to be known from Sruti itself. (vide page 12) To describe the immanence and Transcendence of God, he refers to Taittareya Upanisad 'Anyontarātma'. Making use of abbreviations as S D. OM LN etc he makes discussions quite interesting and analytical. There is a clear account in later Chapters of Vallabha, and his advaita philosophy. The book concludes with very interesting and illuminating parallelism between Śankar and Vallabha, The last three lectures were arranged by Shrikanak Dave, irector of Youth Welfare Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, in the year 1987, in the

Senate Hall of Gujarat University, Ahmedabad. These lectures take us to classroom of Dr. Pandey, and leave us with rich admiration for our ancient Wisdom of Advaita. God is a very important concept for any thinker; and it is very enlightening concept, when it is logically presented by Philosopher. The Book though small in size, has magnanimous matter of philosophy of God. Hence it is sure to receive widespread appreciation of readers and scholars.

— **T. F Bidari**

(2)

'Sudden and Gradual' Approaches to Enlightment in Chinese thought. Edited by Peter N Gregory (Buddhist Tradition Series) Published by Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Ltd Delhi. PP 474, Price Rs. 225/- only

"Sudden and Gradual" is a scholarly book on Chinese Philosophy as it developed from V century A. D. onwards by the Ch'an Masters of Mahāyāna School. It is published along with many other masterly works as a work, in 'Buddist Tradition Series'. The editor of this valuable collection of essays by masterly writers, has systematically arranged, sudden-Gradual polatity of Chinese thought in meaningful ways; and has himself contributed one essay-the 4th in II Sec., on the concept of sudden enlightenment. In his mature and readable style, he mentions the important aspects of the classical debate between subitism and gradualism of Chinese thought in respect of Buddha's Philosophy, and meditation technique of Ch'an masters. The book opens with a concise and clear-cut exposition of the debatable issue, in the form of foreward, by Alex Wayman, and a very meaningful summary of all four hundred and fifty-page text of the Book in short span of barely nine pages-the concluding part 'Afterword' by Tuwei-ming, the senior Professor of Chinese history and Philosophy at Harvard University.

The main contributors of ten long essays are Robert E. Buswell, James Cahill, Paul Demieville, Neal Donner-who is translator of the first two writers, Luis O Gomez, Peter N Gregory, Whalen Lai, Richard John Lynn, John R McRae and R. A. Srein. There are three articles in the I section-entitled 'The sudden and Gradual Debates; and II section entitled 'Sudden and Gradual Enlightenment in Chinese Buddhism' contains five articles, and in the concluding section-III, entitled 'Analogies in the cultural sphere' there are two essays on poetry and theory of painting. The main text is followed by 'After word', by Tu Wei-ming, and Index. Many essays contain a long list of references and Hermenautical references to scriptures. Sanskrit original works on Buddhism and to other published works on Buddhism. A special mention must be made of the lucid and elegant flow of enlightening thought of eminent researcher and senior professor of Buddhist studies at the University of Michigan, Dr. Luis O Gomez who writes a prolific essay 'Purifying Gold', for a length of sixty eight pages which is followed by interesting notes of thirty pages-length. This is a 'brief' account of the scheme of book, which mentions the following numerous versions of gradual/sudden Enlightenment (of northern and Southern schools).

The terms, 'gradual enlightement' and 'sudden enlightenment' seem to be very simple in nature and plain in meaning. But the senior Professors of Buddhism have probed so deep in the matter that entire fabric of Buddhism and native Chinese Philosophy seems to be coloured by the insoluble problem of these contrary concepts of realisation. Not merely Ethics and Religion are so described in India Tibet and China, but the meditation practices and Aesthetics are characterised by the Gradual sudden-polarity. In modern Sanskrit terminology, the sudden enlightenment is called 'Yugapat' the masters of Indian Buddhism, Tao Masters and Chinese Ch'an Masters are quoted by the writers, to make the discussion very light, intelligible and interesting. 'Go wash your bowls' says Chao-Chou, and there are many dialogues of the masters mainly Mahayana Masters to remove the doubts in mind

regarding the nature of enlightenment, and method of meditation.

This is Chih-i's view : "Once one has trained the wisdom-eye through meditation and has allowed through study the outer light to shine, it is possible to see clearly the "object" perceived by subjective enlightened intution (though it must be understood that at such a stage the subject-object dichotomy is no longer in effect). One can then take real possession of the dharma-treasure yet harbour no conceit' (vide p. 203, II sec, II essay by Neal Donner) In this debate all issues of scriptural authority, Hermeneutical reference, and the mystical nature of Jnana, mysticism yoga and intuition are directly included. So vast is the scope of gradual/sudden enlightenment polarity of Chinese Philosophy from the V century A. D.

The last essay is a change – a new turn as it were–for it contains modernistic, Humanistic and practical message to man who is lost all along in the clouds of Mysticism and Transcendentalism of supreme nature of wisdom and Enlightenment. The debate between southern and northern view, or between sudden and gradual enlightenment or between the relative and absolute knowledge is often repeated in eight essays. But each reference, and each fact of spiritual experience brings a new colour and meaning of meditation on the nature of Dharma and Nirvana. The interesting parables in all essays create a special interest in reading a lengthy material on the subject. Buddhist scriptures and teachings are unintelligible to a layman; and the logic of middle path of Mahayana teachers is too subtle to be followed by the reader. But the insight into psychology and modernity of mindless meditation introduce the reader to real nature of enlightenment and Buddhahood. The Editor deserves all compliments for his pains taking work of presenting the 'old wine in new bottles' and for his personal contribution of an article on ' Sudden Enlightenment followed by Gradual cultivation ' Tsung-mi's Analysis of Mind.

Let me quote the following logical concept of Shen-hui expressed in "Platform Sermon". When you desire nirvana as purity of mind, it is a subtle delusion : "If you think of abiding in Nirvana, this nirvana becomes a fetter. if you think of abiding in emptiness this emptiness becomes a fetter ; if you think of abiding in concentrated mind, this concentrated mind become fetter." (Vide p 78 Section I, 3rd essay by Luis O Go'mez.)

Let me conclude this long review with a special compliment to and appreciation of the last essay "After word, thinking of" Enlightenment "relgiously' by Tu wei-Ming who mentions admirably about the practical and empirical view point i. e. the relevance of Enlightenment for a layman. He says that human nature is not only a ground of being but also Transformative and creative activity. The awareness is the inherent nature - The original nature of "chiieh" enligtenment in us is the " great matter ". Subitist, thus is a wise saint who reminds of our original nature (vide P 454 last section); and we are also assured that we can get it simply by willing it. Let me quote the last reference in the book: It is an interesting dialogue between the master and a monk (vide PP455k456. Notes.) What is most tormenting thing in this world "? The master asked a monk. The monk answered: " Hell is the most tormenting thing. "Not so when that which is draped these robe threads is unaware of the Great Matter, that I call the most tormenting thing", said the master.

Prof. T. F. Bidari

(3)

'THE HINDU VISION' By Prof. Anantanand Rambachan Asst Prof of Religion at St. Olaf College in Minnesota PP. 50, Price Rs 75. Published by Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi.

This Hand book of Hinduism, which may also be called, 'Hinduism at a glance', is an enlarged version of his Radio broadcasts on BBC world-Service, under the title–'Reflections' during the period 1983–88. Dr Anantanand has expressed a clear and concise account of the vast philosophy and Religion of Hindus. A native of Trinidad and Tobago, speaks as clearly as a Resident Indian and researcher, There are five Chapters–The 'Panchamukhi' of Indian thought. They are, 1) Worship in Hinduism 2) Fullness of Life., 3) Nature of death 4) Karmayoga, and 5) A Hindu looks at Jesus. The text is followed by Bibliography and Index, as usual. In Preface he mentions about response of BBC listeners to his talks. The book is dedicated to his wife-Geetha-'for Geeta', and this shows his debt to her generosity, and also it refers to the Holy word 'Gita' as there are numerous references to 'Gita'. Only the first Chapter ends with references. At the end there is reference to famous writers, such as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Sharma, Dr. T. M P Mahadevan etc. These aspects of book are indication of its authenticity.

There are useful references to social and Moral philosophy of Hindus, in respect of prayer, 'Puja' and philosophy. Some of the problems Indian social Philosophy are intriguing; but in this of small book all confusions are removed. Prayer has a meaning in respect of inner development. 'Puja' room in some corner of the house makes the house a small temple. 'Murti–Puja' form of worship of deity, does not mean idolatry. The Purusharthas,–Dharma', Artha' 'Kama' and 'Moksa' are milestones of human perfection. Death is only a meaning of life. 'Moksa clelebrates the oneness and unity of existence' (Vide P. 25) " My interest in Jesus was encouraged and deepened by Hindu writers.

The interest of major Hindu figures of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Jesus also prompted me to read the New Testament" (vide p. 40) These words are clear and yet penetrating in nature. The parables of 'tenth missing man on a river bank, and also of Brahadaranyak Upanisad-the three instructions of 'Prajāpati' are so briefly mentioned that they serve useful purpose, Buddha's story of bringing mustard seed from deathless family, shows the endless nature of death - 'our odyssev is never ending', Birth and death, says the author, are complimentary." "Death is coeval with birth." The references to 'Bhagavadgita' are quite apt. The 'ārati-Mantra' – Na Tatra suryo Bhati- 'and the other 'Mantras' are familiar to readers, in India and abroad. The last chapter comparison between Hinduism and Christianity is sole objective of our 'Academy of comparative philosophy and Religion' and it so dear to our Master, Gurudeo Ranade ! The author can now embark on a scheme of writing on Indian Metaphysics and spiritualism. Publishers deserve compliment from laymen and foreigners for such a clear vision of Hinduism-past and present. Suffice it to say that it is an admirable Introduction to Indian Philosophy.

Prof S. L. Patil

(4)

Divine Distraction : A guide to the guru-devotee realatioship Author : James Steinberg Printed by The Dawn Horse Press California. Pages 320. Price 12.95 U. S. $

James Steinberg, an ardent seeker of truth, acknowledges the indispensability of a guru or a spiritual master to the sadhakas to lead towards the Realization. A mere admission of this fact would be a futile exercise; the author mellowed by his own experience is seen dissolved at the

feet of his spiritual master Da Avabhasa, in a total self-surrender. What Lord Krishna advises Arjuna, 'Sarva dharman parityajya mamekam sharanam vraja,' James Steinberg elaborates extensively. This is supported by appropriate and abundant illustrations and evidences freely taken from the lives of great saints and adepts of all climes and of all times.

The book is in two parts. Part one is expository, and explains in detail the supreme secrets of the great tradition of guru devotee relationship. He writes :

"It is not only my intention that this book be a means to prepare the reader to rightly approach the God-man; an additional purpose of this book is to counter the misin-formation that exists in popular mind about gurus and minority or alternative religions in general.

The intention of the book he writes :

" is a call for open-mindedness and tolerance relative to the guru-devotee relationship and religious minorities, and is a means for contributing to the genuine education that can be the foundation of that tolerance".

What is required in a sadhaka is the open-mindedness, and the readiness to recieve the best from any quarter of the world. James Stainberg gradually highlights the primary importance and significance of satsang i. e. keeping the company of great masters and adepts satsang is a sure means to reach the highest rungs of God-realization. What does one achieve being in the company of the holy ? The answer is simple. Distraction from all suffering. This distraction prepares the minds of sadhakas to undergo full transformation required in a genuine sadhana. The author aptly remarks as to how satsang is the safest way as compared to the path of sadhana; in the path of sadhana; the disciple is vulnerable to the feelings of egoism; this narrows down the attitude and vision of the sadhana;

consequently he is robbed of open-mindedness. feelings of self-surrender, sine qua non for a sadhaka on the path of Realization. In this context, the author gives the example of Swami Vivekananda and Ramkrishna.

Part two, with ten chapters handles diligently such topics as : Who is the godman ? The tradition of the devotion to the adept, Satsang, The necessity of a guru, and Functions of a guru etc. In these days of self styled gurus who are growing like mushrooms, it goes extremely difficult for a sadhaka to trace and identify a genuine guru. To quote Da Avabhasa :

"The spiritual master is the spiritual master through the realisatian of superior personal existence. His or her personal existence superior or inferior is utterly transcended in god-realization. That transcendence establishes the true and great function of the spiritual master or adept."

Equally large are the impediments in the way of Guru-disciple relations. Keeping in mind the western man, James Steinberg rightly points out how the news media scandalize the age old great tradition of Guru-disciple relationship to a form of slavery. Equally vulnerable and susceptible is the mass that is very easily swayed away by their wrongly understood ideal of equality. Hence they are averse to this idea of total surrender to the spiritual master. A few other hurdles in this path according to the author are egoism; cultism; and western man's overwhelming sense of suspicion and prejudice towards religions and spiritual practice, other than his own. In the following chapters the author dwells on the functions of the sadguru, Guru-devotee relation etc. The author assures the sadhaka that the karmas of a disciple are no more a hindrance, as those karmas just dissolve in the presence of a sadguru.

The language is simple; presentation clear; and the cumulative effect very penetrating. With little pedantry and no obscurity in the book, the lay and learned alike can

have a peep into the author's frequently appearing fervent and intense feelings of devotion towards his master Da Avabhasa. Steinberg elevates his master to the higher pinnacles with his unassuming feelings and compliments. But, to quote Kabir

'सब धरति कागज करूँ लेखनी बनराय
सप्त समंदर कि मसि करूँ गुरु गुन लिखा न जाय'

(even if the whole planet is used as a sheet of paper, all trees as a pen, and all the waters of the seven seas as the ink—still it falls short – for a real Guru is beyond description and it is endless.)

In brief, the book is of much use to the followers of Bhakti marg (way of the heart); and for the seekers of spiritual Truth in general.

Prof. M. V BAGI

O O O

PUNYA TITHI, JUNE, 1993

The "PUNYA TITHI" of Shri GURUDEO RANADE will be held in the Mandir from 2-6-1993 to 6-6-1993. Devotees are requested to take advantage of the Saptah and join in intensive meditation and discourses. Those who will require accomodation in the Gurudeo Mandir are requested to give information to the Manager of the Trust before 25-5-1993.

Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum.

Quarterly report for the period ending 31-3-1993.

Poojya Swamiji Shivadevandagiri, Sri Rama Krishna Ashram Davanageri, 577001, Karnataka state, camped at Gurudeo Mandir Belgaum from 23-2-1993 to 3-3-93 and delivered lectures on Bhagwad Geeta in the evening, daily in the Mandir from 6-30 P. M. to 8-00P.M. The lectures were well attended.

On account of Sri Ramanavami festival, Geeta Ramayan programme by Sri Vijaya Prabhu Khanolkar of Belgaum was arranged at 6-00 P. M. to 7-00 P. M. daily in the Gurudeo Mandir from 30-3-1993 to 1-4-1993. The function was well attended.

We thank the following persons for their donations to the A. C. P. R. Belgaum.

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O O O

Obituary

Late Viswanath Limaye, the author of Historical Rāma (two volumes in Hindi-सत्याग्रही राम; and शस्त्राग्रही राम), expressed his devotion to Gurudeo, by sending the two volumes, just a week before his death, [in the first week of Feb. 1993.]

May his soul rest in Peace !

BOOK SECTION

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's Ātmānātma - Viveka

– By Prof. Dr. K. V. Apte, SANGLI

II-Part

In this Section 9 the concept of Nescience is explained. There is no cause of Nescience; it is not produced by anything. It is beginningless, in the sense that it is not known when and where the Nescience began; hence it is said to be without beginning. Yet this Nescience is not infinite or endless; for, this Nescience gets annihilated by the right knowledge of the Self or Brahman. Thus this Nescience is beginningless yet subject to destruction.

The Nescience is indescribable either as existent or non-existent. It cannot be called either as existent or non-existent; hence it cannot be described by the use of the words existent or non-existent. The reason is :- The existent (sat) is that which always exists in the three times–the past, the present, and the future. Nescience is not such an existent, because it is destroyed by the knowledge of the Self. The Self alone is the existent; unlike the Self, the Nescience is not existent. Now, non-existent (asat) is that which is never experienced. For example, the Son of a barren woman, the horns of a hare, etc. The Nescience is not such a non-existent; for everybody sometime or other becomes aware that he is ignorant, that he possesses nescience. And how can that thing which is experienced be called non-existent? Besides, nothing can be produced from that which is non-existent.

But the cosmos originates from this Nescience (See Section 39). Due to this reason also, Nescience is not non-existent. Further, Nescience cannot be said to be both existent. as well as non existent; for it is contradictory to both of them; and moreover two contradictory attributes like existent and non-existent cannot be predicated of one and the same subject namely Nescience; they cannot coexist in Nescience. Thus, the Nescience is indescribable with the words existent and non existent. as it is neither existent nor non-existent nor both.

This Nescience is of positive nature. Here Nescience is said to be of positive nature in order to indicate that it is not the absence of knowledge. Now, when Nescience is said to be of positive nature, it does not mean that Nescience is existent like the Self; for, the Nescience which is of positive nature is completely annihilated by the knowledge of the self Hence it can be said that that thing which exists or appears to exist for sometime but gets destroyed by the knowlegde of the self is of positive nature

This Nescience is made of three qualities. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the three qualities. These three qualities are the constituent elements of Nescience; these three of together form the Nescience. That the Nescience is made of three qualities is known thus :- 1) Nescience is the material cause of the cosmos. Now every object in the universe possesses three properties namely pain, pleasure, and infatuation. Now the universe is the effect/product of Nescience which is its cause. The properties of the effect come or inhere form its cause, hence the properties of qualities of the cause can be inferred from the properties of the effect. Thus, it can be inferred that Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas which are the causes of pleasure, pain, and infatuation respectively must exist in Nescience of the cosmos. 2) In a scriptural statement namely there is ' one she-goat possessing the red, white and black colours ' (Ajām ekām lohita-śukla kṛ ām-śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, 4.5). Māyā (= Avidyā ajsnāna. Nescience) is said to possess the red white and black colours which indicate the three qualities

Sattva Rajas and Tamas. Thus Māyā is constituted by Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Thus, on the basis of inference and the scripture, Nescience is known to be formed by these three qualities.

This Nescience is ' something miraculous '. It is different from the existent as well as the non-existent. Just as a eunuch is different from male and female beings, so also Nescience is distinct from the existent and the non-existent. Hence wise people call it ' something different,' ' something strange ', or ' something miraculous '.

This Nescience is contradictory to the knowledge of the Self. Hence both Nescience and knowledge of the Self cannot co-exist in a person. The Nescience gets destroyed by the knowledge of the self. Nescience is completely uprooted without any residue by the self or Brahman.

This Nescience can be proved on the basis of our experince and Vedic scriptures. (a) In this world, a man has such an experience – ' I am ignorant; I possess Nescience '. And that thing is which is experienced. (b) The Vedic scripture asserts :- " The sages come to know the God's own power concealed by its own qualities ". Here, the God's power is nothing but Māyā or Avidyā or the Nescience.

(10)

From that Nescience is born non-discrimination. From non-discrimination originates egoism. From egoism spring up passions like attachment etc. On account of passions like attachment etc. actions are performed (lit. born). Due to actions there is the embodiment. And owing to embodiment there arises pain or sorrow (10).

There was put in Section 3 a question regarding the cause of human suffering or pain. The causal series of sorrow as explained uptil now is as follows :–

Nescience → non-discrimination → egoism → attachment etc → actions → embodiment → sorrow. Thus the basic or fundamental cause of human suffering is Nescience.

Now, if the sorrow is to be removed, then in a reverse process, one has to secure the removal of Nescience. Now that is explained in the next Section 11.

(11)

(Query:) When is there the cessation of sorrow? (Reply:) The cessation of sorrow takes place, when there is complete destruction of acceptance of body (i. e. embodiment). (Question:) Why is the word 'complete' (sarvātmanā) employed (here)? (Reply:) Though in the state of sleep there is cessation of sorrow, still again at the time of the waking state (after sleep) there arises (the awareness of the embodiment and then) the sorrow; (from this it is clear that) the awareness of embodiment and sorrow survives in the form of impressions. Hence the word 'complete' is used in order to indicate that the cessation (of the awareness of embodiment and sorrow in the form of impressions) is expected here. (Query:) When does the cessation of embodiment take place? (Reply:) When actions have been fully stopped i. e. destroyed. (Question:) When is possible the cessation (=destruction) of actions? (Answer:) On the complete cessation of (passions like) attachment etc. (Query:) When does the cessation (of passions like) attachment etc. take plece? (Reply:) On the full cessation of egoism. (Question) When is there the cessation of egoism? (Answer:) On the complete cessation of non-discimination. (Query:) When is there the cessation of non-discrimination? (Reply:) On full destruction of Nescience. (Question:-) When is (possible) the destruction of Nescience? (Answer:-) There is complete destruction of Nescience, when there has arisen (the awareness of) the oneness or identity of Brahman and the Self (after the knowledge of the Self) (11).

There arises sorrow on account of embodiment. Hence for the cessation of sorrow complete destruction of embodiment is essential. Embodiment means to have a body and to have an awareness of this living body in the form of 'I', 'me', and 'mine'. This awareness disappears only temporarily in the state of sleep and for that much time there is cessation of sorrow. But as soon as we are awake, there arises the awareness of embodiment and then again we feel sorrow. The reason for this is that there is awareness of the body in the form of impressions (Vāsanā), even during the sleep-time. So full cessation of embodiment means complete stoppage of the cycle of birth and death. Then only there is absolute cessation of sorrow.

Now, the causal series of sorrow has been described in Sctions 3-10. An effect arises from a cause. Now no effect will follow, if its cause is destroyed. In accordance with this principle, in Section 11 is described the process as to how the causes should get destroyed. Briefly, the fundamental cause of sorrow is Nescience. And for its annihilation, there must be the cognition of the identity between Brahman and the Self (Ātman) and then this oneness must become an actuality. In other words, the sorrow completely ceases, when there takes place oneness of Brahman and Ātman. Nescience gets destroyed on account of realisation of the oneness of the Self with Brahman which is of the nature of bliss. And on the annihilation of Nescience the sorrow which springs up from Nescience fully disappears.

(12)

(Objection :) Really as daily or obligatory actions have been prescribed (by scriptures or Dharma-śāstras), there will take place the cessation of Nescience due to those very daily actions. In that case then what is the use of knowledge ?

(Reply :) If such an objection is raised, our reply is :- There does not take place the cessation of Nescience

on account of actions, etc. If it be asked : ' why is that so?,' the reply is : (This would have happened if there were contradiction between actions and Nescience) but actually there is mutual contradiction between actions and knowledge. Hence the cessation of Nescience follows indeed from knowledge alone (12).

In this Section 12, a doubt is raised regarding the statement in Section 11 that the Nescience ceases when there is cognition of oneness between Brahman and the Self, and the doubt is removed.

The objection is :- The Vedas or Dharma-śāstras have laid down obligatory actions like Sandhyā-vandana, etc. Hence they must be performed. Their performance does not PROCURE any religious merit but their non-performance leads to obstacles. etc and to sorrow in future. So we can say that these obligatory actions can destroy Nescience.

This objection can be removed thus :- The obligatory actions would have destroyed Nescience, had there been an opposition between actions in general and Nescience. But the fact is that there is no mutual contradiction between actions and Nescience. Had there been mutual opposition, like that between light and darkness, between actions and Nescience, then only actions would have destroyed Nescience. But as there exists no such contradictions between actions and Nescience, the actions-be they daily/obligatory or otherwise-cannot remove Nescience.

Thus Śaṅkarācārya has said in his work named Ātma-bodha, 3 :- ' Action will not produce the cessation of Nescience as there is no contradiction between the two'. Really, speaking there takes place purification of the mind (citta) due to actions like obligatory ones, etc. Hence Sadānanda in his Vedānta-sāra has said : ' The highest purpose of these obligatory and other actions is the purification of the intellect or the mind.' ' The use of actions is

limited only to the purification of the mind,' says Śaṅkarācārya in his work Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi (Cittasya suddhaye Karma. [11.]

On the contrary, knowledge and Nescience, like light and darkness, are diametrically opposed to each other; and hence due to knowledge alone, Nescience perishes. (See - Vidyā avidyām nihanti eva tejaḥ timira-saṅghavat-: Ātmabodha of Śaṅkarācārya. Just as light removes the mass of darkness, so also knowledge destroys Nescience).

If all the above is taken into account, it becomes clear that action is not opposed to Nescience; on the contrary knowledge alone is contradictory to Nescience. Hence actions cannot remove Nescience, but by ' (Self)-knowledge ' alone Nescience is destroyed.

Moreover, here it should be taken into account that Nescience is opposed to knowledge, that Nescience gets removed by knowledge, as pointed out in the explanation of the concept of Nescience, under Section 3.

(Query:) How or wherefrom is obtained the knowledge (which destroys Nescience) ? If such a question is asked, the reply is : (That knowledge) is derived or obtained from deliberation or reflection alone. (That is to say:) knowledge is derived from that reflection or thinking whose object is the discrimination between the Self and the not-self.

Now what persons are qualified or proper or fit for that deliberation ? (Reply:) A man possessing the group of four requisites (sādhana) is qualified (to undertake that reflection). And this group of the four requisites is as follows:- (1) Discrimination between the eternal and non-eternal things. (2) Aversion or dislike or indifference to or absence of craving for the enjoyment of fruits (of actions) here (in this world) as well as hereafter in the next world. (3) Acquisition of six things (or virtues) like peace of mind (śama), control of senses (dama), etc. (4)

Possession of the desire to get released (from the cycle of birth and rebirth) (13).

A man secures Nescience-removing knowledge through reflection. Hence Vidyāraṇya, the author of Pañcadaśī, has said: 'knowledge arises from reflection' (vicārāt jāyate jnānam.) And this deliberation refers to the objects namely the Self and the not-self.

Now, all persons are not capable to pursue or undertake the reflection. Only that man can reflect who has certain qualifications or worthiness. He who has got the group of four requisites becomes fit to undertake the thinking about the Self and not-self. These four requisites are as follows :-

There should be discrimination between the eternal and non-eternal things. Brahman/Ātman is the only eternal thing; and anything other than Ātman is non-eternal. Thus one must come to know the distinction between the eternal and not-eternal things which are the Self and the not-self.

Aversion to enjoyment of here and hereafter means absence of desire to enjoy fruits of actions in this world as well as in the next world. If one is interested in the enjoyment, he will not be able to pay sufficient attention to the eternal and non-eternal things. The knowledge that everything in this world and in the next world is temporary may lead to the absence of craving for enjoyments.

The possession of the six things like śama (control of mind) is very essential. For, if the mind-body-complex is tossed by worldly things, it would be very difficult to concentrate the mind, and to reflect on the Self and the not-Self.

Desire for liberation is the desire to secure salvation after escaping from this empirical transmigration which is

full of grief. This is necessary; for if one feels happy with this world, he will not think of escaping from it. In that case he will never undertake the reflection on the Self and not-Self.

These four requisites are now explained in the following Sections.

The discrimination between the eternal and non-eternal things means a decision that Brahman (alone) is the true or real, while the world is only non-true or false (14).

Eternal is that thing which has no origin and no destruction, which has no limits of place, matter and time, which does not undergo any modifications or changes and which exists in three times-the past, the present and the future. Such eternal thing is only one and it is Brahman alone. Now this Brahman is not something different from Ātman or the Self; both are one and the same. Thus the Self is the eternal thing.

The world as opposed to Brahman / Ātman is non-eternal and hence false. The world which appears or is understood as something different from Brahman or the Self is the not-self, and it is subject to origination and destruction, hence is perishable, is limited, changing and hence non-eternal and hence false.

There should be a firm decision of the intellect that Brahman or the Self alone is eternal, real and true, while the world is non-eternal, unreal, untrue, false.

The word Ātman in Ātmānātma-Viveka stands for Brahman; for, in the philosophy of Śaṇkarācārya, Ātman is Brahman.

Just as here in this world there is no desire (of any one) for enjoying the vomitted things or urine, or excreta etc. so also absence of craving for objects other than the

embodiment (and also) for garlands, (besmearing of sandal paste) and copulation with women, etc., is called aversion (virāga) regarding this world; so also absence of craving for things like enjoyments with (nymphs like) Rambhā, Urvaśī, etc. hereafter in worlds like heavenly world or in the world of Brahmā is called aversion regarding the next world. (15).

The discrimination between the eternal and non-eternal things assists the obtainment of aversion or absence of craving. Vairāgya is absence of attachment, or cessation of desire or craving. The attachment to the non-eternal, unreal or false things is not useful. There are many worlds like this world (the world subject to Death) i. e. next worlds such as the celestial world, etc. Fruits of actions are to be enjoyed in one of these worlds. But as all these worlds are non-eternal, the fruits of actions which can be obtained in them are also non-eternal. There should be no desire to enjoy such transitory or evanescent fruits. If there be such a desire, it is but natural that the attention of a man will be directed towards worldly activity and worldly objects, and then such attention as is required towards the eternal thing i. e. Brahman or Ātman cannot be given. Hence the absence of desire to enjoy the fruits of actions is necessary; the possession of virāga leads to easy acquisition of the six things like control of mind, etc.

(To be continued)

O O O

" The Series of Karma does not conflict with avidya (ignorance) though it is perishable; on the contrary, it nourishes it Jnāna (Realisation) is the fire which burns away Karma and ignorance. "

—Kaivalya Navaneeta; Section II, Verse 70.

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